James Benson

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5/15/2017

To Whom It May Concern,

This purpose of this letter is to give an account of the character of Mr. Travis Benson. I understand that this will undoubtedly be looked upon as if it were written with a personal bias, as it is written by his brother, however I will attempt to be as objective as possible.

Travis Benson, in short, is my best friend and always will be. All during my childhood, he was the popular one with friends and I was the loner, choosing to spend my time with either my brother or myself. Because of his popularity, and me being the older brother, I was often required to "watch over" him but not for any serious reasons, such as delinquency. Looking back, I can see that he operated on a higher mental level than myself. He was always the "sharp" one while I had to think, actively commit to memory and work hard, and it seemed that he had to know everything. If he came across something that was beyond his understanding, he took it apart, read or researched it until it was understood.

When he left for the military, it took us all by surprise. Growing up this was someone that did not like being told what to do much less have such a regimented lifestyle as the military. We did have our chores to do on the farm however both of us never liked needing to get up early to feed the cows and horses, bottle feeding the calves, cleaning out the water tanks, doing the irrigating water...etc. When he returned from the Army, he was a completely different person. He was now more regimented duty minded. However, he was still curious and, while in the military, continued to use his mental prowess such as when, during a story he recounted to us, he used the "rule book" to get an iron issued to him rather than pay for one at the PX because he went over it with a fine took comb and found where it was stated that one would be issues to keep ones uniform in proper appearance.

School was something of a dichotomy. If there was an interest in the subject then he excelled in whatever he did, sometimes not even needing to open (or even obtain) the text book for the class. In those that were relegated to "inferior" classes it seemed that because the other classes were coming so easy, these were neglected....as if he just worked on a higher level and became bored with the subject; there was no challenge. I have always envied his mental capacity and prowess and with each debate we have (over physics or sciences in general) I always come away having learned something from him. One particular incident was when we were recently arguing about some science issues that a recent movie had wrong. He took two days to research his point of view before presenting me with proof. Such is the way he works, he researches everything in order to definitively know about what is going on. Every time I talk to him about his engineering classes at the University, he recounts how everything is going good and not too hard and I marvel because I took the same classes and found them something I had to work at. I completely expect him to graduate with a high GPA and be in the top percentage of his class.

This drive is used to support his position (on whatever) as well as to perform his own kind of "mental" justice. I will give an example. Should he be in a conversation with someone about something and he feels that it is wrong, he will research the point and rebuke the points given during the conversation, as if he were saying "see, I proved you wrong". This has caused many arguments with me, however I can see the truth of what he does. It extends his knowledge and understanding and gives him a peace of mind that he will not be "taken" again (though while growing up I often felt that he just liked to rub it in my face that he was so smart).

He is also deeply rooted in our "farm" values, such as taking care of family. As an uncle, he has been second to none. Reluctantly I will admit that at times he has been more of a father than myself to my daughters and I would not change a second of that. His values and ideals for my children are the same as my own and I have never had any concerns over his teachings to them. Should anything ever happen to me, he is named as the one that I would want to watch over my daughters because I can think of no one I would rather have. He would protect them, guide them, watch over them and provide for them until he is physically unable to. His feelings of duty and loyalty run deep and are part of his personal values.

On another note, he does have a tendency to "do his own thing" from time to time, which either has a 50/50 change of success or failure however those failures are used to learn from so that they are not repeated in the future, thus it does not make him look as if he cannot learn from mistakes. He (and we) are also very direct, logical and believe in "brutal honesty". This also has had something of a detrimental effect with others that feel that it is too brash however he likes to be straight-to-the-point and presented with logic. That way there is no question.

All-in-all, he does have his drawbacks (as we all have) that have caused arguments in the past however there is no one else I know that has such a deep rooted sense of family obligation, duty and honor. The way his mind works is continually amazes myself to the point that I wish I could have such mental prowess. I have tried to emulate him however my mind just does not work the same way (things are more of a struggle for me to process and remember). If you get on his good side, his sense of loyalty will provide you a good friend for life and a person with a most amazing mind that is by far the smartest person I know.

Having him go away over such "indiscretion" in the name of researching a point-of-view by someone else would essentially tear a hole our lives. He has been part of the strength of our family. He is part of our whole, a part that is required for the machine to work. In addition to being one of the best teachers my daughters could have, he is also the one that makes us laugh, the one that keeps things rooted in logic and reality (as when someone does something stupid he will let you know), the "free labor" for my parents (who need the help since they are increasing in age) and someone for me to pit my wits against. I'm sure every family says "it will tear the family apart" however in this case he is the one that keeps things going. I will admit that I do not speak or visit my parents as much as I should however when he has free time from college, he goes home to my parent's house to help them out and visit everybody. Having had him in my life for the last 42 years and my daughter's lives for the last 19 years, I cannot imagine how things would be without him and his logic-based, in-your-face facts for my daughters or myself.

Should you have any questions, please let me know, I am happy to help.

Thank you,
James Benson

Dated: May 20, 2017

To Whom It May Concern

I have known Travis Benson both academically and personally for the past 4 years. I met him in the Fall of 2013 on our first day of Differential Equations class. Since the class had options for group studies, Travis, Joe and I became study partners. Initially we decided to reserve a study room at the University to meet up twice a week for our assignments and group studies. As the semester progressed it became apparent that Travis was the best note taker in class among us, since he also took all the notes digitally, Travis would share them with us after each lecture. His lecture notes were picture perfect copies of the whiteboard and he was helping enough to share with us every time. Travis is detail-oriented, meticulous and never complained about his role. He was happy to cover for anyone when one of us couldn't make it to class. He is so aware of his responsibilities that I do not remember him missing a single class that semester. When I missed a class, his attached notes to my email will also include footnotes about the topics that were discussed and the next topic that is up for reading for the next lecture.

In the coming years I'd get to know Travis more both from classes we took together like Calculus III and from spending time together. There were times when school, work and everything would weigh me down but one call to him and he will be right there to help. Travis loves academic challenges and Physics being my field of study, his expertise in multidimensional visualization came in very handy.

Travis loves cooking. He is quite a good cook. Few of us have spent the entire finals week at his place studying and enjoying his delicious cooking. He loves company. Travis goes above and beyond to make others have a better week, this is no exaggeration. Many Fridays and Saturdays Travis would invite 7-8 friends from University of Wyoming (UW) for dinner. It was always a good get-together at his place. If someone couldn't make it because they are working late, he would make plates for them and deliver to their workplace.

He is truly a good person at heart. He is charismatic, helping and caring. He is a reliable friend. Whenever anyone needed a ride among our friends Travis is the guy to ask. Yes, he would say, "Not again!" but he will help out, every time. When I needed a ride to Casper, he was there to help, when our friend was going overseas for an exchange program, he took her to the airport in Denver and went to pick her up when she returned. There are many many occasions Travis has helped me or his other friends. He has helped some of us look for houses to rent, with a couch to crash in need, attended our graduation ceremonies and to throw a party later.

He is one of my best friends. A sincere and honest person. He embodies everything in a great friend. I can speak of no one whose house I felt more at home as Travis'. In my over 4 years of knowing him, I have not ever received an ill advice from him.

I can confirm that in all the time I have known him, Travis Benson has been an honest, trustworthy and a good person. I wish as a friend I could do more to return the favors he has done to me over the years. I hope he will be given an opportunity to succeed in life as the brilliant, caring and helpful person I know him to be.

He is a true friend, not only to me, but to many of us and he deserves a second chance to be the best he could be.

Sincerely,

Dias

Win Dias
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To whom it may concern,

I am writing this in reference to Travis Benson. I have known Travis for approximately 14 years. In all that time I have known him to be an honest law abiding citizen with an honest and open nature. Travis has been respectful to the rule of law and in equal treatment of all people. I have not witnessed any violent behavior or acts of aggression even when threatened. My background is in EMS and as a Deputy Sheriff in Albany County Wyoming. I worked the first 2 years of Law Enforcement in the detention center and I have seen firsthand the evil of men. It is my opinion that Travis does not fall into any category of what I would consider a dishonest or malcontent person. I believe him to be truthful in all counts no matter how embarrassing or sensitive the subject matter. Travis has a very respectable history in employment and his service to this country. Travis has a solid family life with their support as well as the support from friends. He is a well-adjusted member of society and will continue to be driven and thrive in his chosen area. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Clancy Henderson NREMT-P, FP-C

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WYOMING

AirMethods

Hello, I'm Laramie Benson, Travis Benson's niece. I wasn't asked to write anything about my Uncle, but I have some things to say about him. I don't know if this will help with anything but I wanted you (or anyone who it concerns) to know how much he means to me.

I am nineteen years old and in those nineteen years I can't think of a single moment without my Uncle Rara in it. I call him Rara because when I was just a toddler I couldn't say Uncle Travis. He has been more of a Dad to me than an Uncle. He has always been there for me. I remember one time my little sister and I gave him a make-over. He laid on the floor in our family room as my sister and I (the talented artists we were) covered his face in different shades of pink, green, blue and purple eyeshadows and blushes. With the additional bright pink lipstick, of course. That was such a fun time. Looking back now he probably didn't like having all that make-up on, but being the great person and uncle he is, he let us do it. This is only one of the many things he would do with us. Other things he used to do with us was to jump on the trampoline, build puzzles, play with Barbie's, and even teach us how to ride our bike.

A few years later, when I was about thirteen or so, my dance studio was having a father daughter dance and I wanted to go so bad. This would be my first father- daughter dance so who better to take than the person that was more my father figure than my Uncle Travis. It was such a fun night, He was dressed in a western style outfit while I was in a Cinderella dress. To me it fit perfect, because the only guy a girl can depend on is her daddy. And that is very true with my Uncle Travis. He would do anything for me, my sister, his friends, and even the whole Benson family, and we would all do anything for him.

As I have been growing up not only has he been my uncle but he has become my teacher, counselor, and dad. Ever since I started school I have had two teachers. My actual teacher and my uncle. Whenever I was, and still am, having trouble in school, he would sit down with me and help work it out. He would always make me work the problem my way then when I came up with my answer (that was wrong) he would look at my work then show me what I did wrong. Only after many questions that were similar to the problem would he say I had it. For instance, this last semester at Casper College I was taking Chemistry. During this class, we were learning stoichiometry, I was having the worst time with this so I asked my uncle for help and after thirty minutes I had stoichiometry down.

He can be great counselor too, he helped me though a pretty tough breakup. This past year, a 2 year relationship ended. When that boy broke my heart, my uncle was there to console me. He gave me advise on how to get over my now ex and even let me cry on his shoulder. He and I would sit and he would let me just rant about my ex. Sometimes he had things to say and other times he just sat there and listened to me because he knew that it was helping me. It was also during this heartbreaking time that he taught me how to golf. He would take me golfing to help me get my mind off my ex, it was a lot of fun. Except when I lost my golf ball in the pond because I am a terrible golfer but he has been helping me with that.

Lastly is him becoming my dad. As I stated earlier, I am a dancer. I have been dancing since I was six years old, so I have been dancing for about thirteen years. In all those years, my Uncle hasn't missed a single performance or dance competition, except for this year when this incident went down in November. My uncle has helped build, haul, and set props for the studio. He has helped my grandma and I build and put together dance costumes. I even asked him to be in a dance with me next year. It was his turn to dance with me at competition. My grandpa has danced with me at competition, he played my dad in Seven Brides for Seven Brothers. Then my real dad (James Benson) danced with me this year as the monster from the movie, Young Frankenstein. So, next year was going to be my Uncle Travis' turn. We were going to do a dance to "*Just Fishin'* "*by Trace Atkins.* I saved my favorite song to do with my favorite person for my last year to dance. I just really hope he and I get the chance to do it. That song is our song because we do together all these things together; I thought we were just going and having fun but really, we were making the best memories I could ask for. Or maybe we could do "Cinderella" *By Steven Curtis Chapmen,* that would be a very fitting song too.

A few years ago, I did a dance to the song "*The Other Little Soldier" By Josh Graham.* In the song, it talks about a father going off to war and never coming back. Well my Uncle was in the army for a while so when I first heard that song I thought of him. Every time I did that dance or even just heard the song I thought "What if Rara would have never come back?" Everything would be different, all the memories I have wouldn't exist because he is in them all. "While all this ran through my head as I'm dancing I would start to cry because I love my Uncle so much and we wouldn't be the Benson Crew without him. He is one of the few people that can help you though anything you need help with. He is the one to make the whole family laugh, he is always cracking jokes and pulling pranks on people. Our family wouldn't be the same without him around. None of us would be the same. Right now, thinking about the possibility of my uncle leaving, makes me cry. I have had many people leave me or just abandon me and he has been a constant in my life. I Love him too much and I want him around for everything else that is going to happen in the future.

If my uncle does go away, that means I will not have a father, teacher, counselor, or support system anymore. He is going to miss out on all the fun family activities, dance performances, and other fun things we do.

Well I think I have said all I can (I have more stories about his and I's adventures but I don't have enough time to type all of them out) about my Uncle Rara. I hope this will help keep my Uncle with me and our family. If not, we are all going to miss him so much and nothing will be the same without him around. We won't be a family anymore without him. "*Ohana means family. Family means nobody gets left behind or forgotten*" said by Lilo and Stitch.

I have a favor to ask the person reading this. Could you please, (if my uncle does go away) before he is taken from us, can you please turn to him and say Foo Foo. Foo Foo is I love you; he was trying to teach me to say I love you when I was little and I couldn't say it and instead I said Foo Foo and it stuck. So no matter what the court says has happened, I know what he is really all about and I will love him no matter what. He is NOT the monster the court is trying to say he is. In all the years growing up, he has never been inappropriate with me or made me feel uncomfortable. Just the opposite, he was the one my sister and I could count on in any situation.

If you have any other questions or want to hear the other stories, I would love to be able to talk with you.

Sincerely,

Laramie Benson

To Whom It May Concern,

Travis Benson has been my friend for the better part of twenty years. In that time, as in any one's life, he has made decisions, some good and some bad. But he has always shown me that he is a good person. Whether it be as simple as helping someone move from one home to the next, or as much as offering someone down on their luck a place to live until they got back on their feet.

Travis was the best man at my wedding. My children have grown up calling him uncle. He has spent many nights under my roof, and has never giving me any cause to doubt my children's safety in his presence.

I do not know all of the facts about the case against my friend. It is my understanding that it is too late for any of that anyway. I am writing this letter to ask you to show leniency.

Respectfully,

Milo W. Spethman